privatisation of telephone services in the country;

(b) if so, what are the demands of the basic operators and how many of them have signed licence agreement with the DOT so far; and

(c) what concrete steps DOT has taken so far to seek help at inter-State level in order to sort out the difficulties at the Government levels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Discussions have been held with private basic operators for reviewing the progress of implementation of their projects. Efforts are being made to sort out the difficulties pointed out by them by coordinating with various State Government and Central Departments such as expeditious permission for laying of cables along highways and on forest land. No concession beyond the terms and conditions of Licence has been offered.

(b) The Association of Basic Telecom Operators has demanded shifting of effective date of licence by one year and also the extension of licence period from 15 years to 25 years. Six private companies have signed the licence agreements with Department of Telecom.

(c) Meetings have been held at Secretary's level with the Ministeries of Surface Transport and Environt & Forests to sort out the burning problem of Right of way faced by the licensees in the implementation of their projects. Chief Secretaries of the respective State Governments have also been addressed demiofficially to extend necessary cooperation in this regard.

Telephones Out of Order in Pauri Garhwal, Uttar Pradesh

609. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages of Pauri Garhwal, Uttar Pradesh which have been connected with telephone facilities during the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that those villages which were connected with telephone remains out of orders and the concerned officials do not care to remove the difficulties;

(c) whether it is a fact that a telephone connection allotted to Village Bara, P.O. Pesoli, Patte-Edwalswun, District Pauri Garhwal is not working properly for the last one year; and

(d) if answer to parts (b) and (c) are in affirmative, what corrective measures are being taken by Government and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) The number of villages in Pauri Garhwal Distt. connected with telephone facility within last three years is 138.

(b) Due to difficult and hilly terrain, some times repair of faulty telephones is delayed. All efforts are made by concerned officers to make arrangements for repair.

(c) The village telephone No. 4627 at Bara P.O. Pesoli, Patti-Edwalsuon, Distt. Pauri Garhwal is at present disconnected due to non payment w.e.f. 30.3.98. The number has been in working condition for last one year with some interruptions due to open wire line for about 5 kms.

(d) The VPT at Bara would be restored as soon as the dues are paid.

Disconnection of Telephones

610. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications received in Ghaziabad Telephone Office during the Ist week of June, 1997 for disconnection of telephones working in Mohan Nagar;